



South Central District Health

Keeping your family & community healthy
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PRESS RELEASE – For Immediate Release

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Conference Aims to Educate Health Care Providers about the Importance of Dental Care for Pregnant Moms

A common myth among pregnant women is that they should avoid receiving dental care while they are pregnant. South Central District Health's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program is hosting a conference for health professionals on Friday, Sept. 8, to help bring the importance of oral health and breastfeeding into focus for local providers. One of the sessions will deal specifically with the relationship between good dental care during pregnancy and its affect on preterm delivery.

Facts show that:

- Women with periodontal disease may be seven times more likely to deliver preterm low birth weight babies.
- The National Institutes of Health report that as many as 18% of premature low birth weight infants born in the United States annually may be attributed to periodontal disease (the same percentage attributed to smoking).
- Only 37% of all Idaho mothers, and 13% of those Medicaid eligible, report receiving dental care during pregnancy. About 73% of pregnant women reported that they were never advised that it was important to receive dental care while pregnant.
- The Idaho Medicaid program reports that preterm low birth weight infants cost 10 times more than non-premature infants, or \$35,776 versus \$3,499 one year after birth.
- In 2004, 10.5% of births or 299 babies were born premature in south central Idaho. If all the mothers of these babies had received dental care during their pregnancies to address periodontal disease, an estimated 54 preterm births may have been prevented and \$1,742,958 may have been saved.
- The Academy of Periodontology recommends that all women receive preventive dental services as early in their pregnancy as possible.

The relationship between periodontal disease and preterm delivery will be addressed at the “What’s the Connection?” conference for health care providers only on Sept. 8, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The conference is being held at the College of Southern Idaho in the Taylor Administration Building, Second Floor. At 1 p.m., Dr. Stacy Seyb, M.D., will specifically address what happens when a pregnant mother doesn’t care for her teeth and the impact bad oral health can have on her unborn child.

Dr. Seyb is an obstetrician who had private practices in Denver and Portland before joining the staff at St. Luke’s Regional Medical Center in Boise. He received his M.D. from the University of Kansas in 1988, and is interested in prenatal care, especially prenatal diagnosis as well as the national problem of preterm delivery. Dr. Seyb will be available for interviews after his talk on Sept. 8.

In addition to the periodontal disease and preterm delivery session, other topics to be covered during the conference include the relationship between oral health and sleep apnea; improving breastfeeding through infant cranio-sacral therapy; and the effect of breastfeeding on oral development.

To schedule an interview with Dr. Seyb, contact Susie Beem, Health Education Specialist, at South Central District Health, 737-5946.

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